

178 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

French ships which took refuge in St. Malo, but his council of war agreed that the design was impracticable.¹

In one way, the battle of La Hogue resembles that of Beachy Head. In each case the admiral who was defeated was forced by the order of his government to fight in spite of his better judgement, and the result was what usually happens when professional opinion is overruled

by politicians. According to Colomb the 'complete

failure of strategy' on the French side led to their being obliged to fight under the most disadvantageous conditions, and made disaster inevitable. Mahan praises

Tourville's tactics in the battle. On the other hand he

asserts that 'considered tactically' the battle 'possesses

little importance, and the actual results have been much

exaggerated^ but popular report has made it one of the

famous sea battles of the world/

Yet, in spite of the success he achieved, Russell has not obtained a great reputation amongst naval historians.

Credit is due to Russell for the promptitude with which,

in face of difficulty, he arranged his junction with the

Dutch; but it can scarcely be contended that at Barfleur,

and during the subsequent movements, he could^ with his

greatly superior fleet, have well done much less than he did.

He won a victory of vast importance, yet of no particular

brilliance. Tourville lost a very small amount

of reputation
in the encounter, and Russell gained as
little.²

Beachy Head and La Hogue too long
monopolised the
attentions of historians. The importance
of Russell's

¹ See Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1692-1693 (1894),
pp. 181-4,
198-214. ilacaniay is mistaken in saying that Rear Admiral
Carter was
killed at the very beginning of the battle (V, 2187 [xviii]). He
was killed
during the pursuit, some hours after it ended. Manuscripts
of the House of
Lords, 1692-1693, p. 212.

^a William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy* (7 vols. ; 1897-
1903), ii. 356.